

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
White River Field Office  
73544 Hwy 64  
Meeker, CO 81641

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**NUMBER:** CO-110-2005-013-EA

**CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER** (optional): COC68255

**PROJECT NAME:** Road Improvement

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado  
T. 3 N., R. 91 W.,  
Sec. 31, E½SE¼.

**APPLICANT:** Darrell W. Camilletti

**ISSUES AND CONCERNS** (optional):

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:**

***Background/Introduction:*** On October 6, 2004, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was notified by the Forest Service that Mr. Camilletti improved an existing two track from his ranch across public lands to the national forest. Apparently the Forest Service gave Mr. Camilletti permission to improve the road because that is what they consider normal maintenance of an existing road.

**Proposed Action:** The proposed action is to authorize the improvement of an existing two track (.71 miles) across public lands. The improvements consisted of removing rocks from the roadway and clearing bush that was obstructing travel. Mr. Camilletti proposes to construct water bars in order to prevent ponding and will reseed the roadway with a BLM approved seed mixture. Future use will be non-motorized using horse-drawn wagons in order to transport guests onto the national forest and supplies will be hauled in a chuck-wagon. The only motorized usage will be for medical emergencies.

**No Action Alternative:** The no action alternative would not have any additional impacts.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD:**

**NEED FOR THE ACTION:** The existing road needed to be authorized for future use and an application was received requesting a right-of-way.

**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Pages 2-49 thru 2-52

Decision Language: “To make public lands available for the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of other resource values.”

**AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES /  
MITIGATION MEASURES:**

**STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH:** In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

**CRITICAL ELEMENTS**

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

*Affected Environment:* The proposed road is shown on the BLM’s General Land Office survey plats from 1921 making it a historic road that was undoubtedly in more or less original condition, discounting the normal weathering process that occur. The road needs to be inventoried and an appropriate Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) forms prepared for the site.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* if any mechanical clearing or maintenance of the road has occurred that resulted in widening of the road or other changes in the character of the historic route the effects could be considered adverse to the site.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* There would have been no effects to the historic site under the No Action Alternative.

*Mitigation:* 1. All maintenance work on the road shall be done in a manner that does not alter the historic character of the road. For example: the road was quite likely constructed with horse drawn equipment such as a Fresno or a horse drawn blade. All maintenance shall be done with hand tools, where appropriate, or with equipment that retains the appearance of having been done with horse drawn equipment. 2. The road shall not be rerouted or upgraded without additional inventory by an approved Archeologist and consultation, as appropriate, with the Colorado SHPO.

## INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

*Affected Environment:* No site specific inventory was conducted of the project area. During the summer of 2004 BLM weed crews, treated noxious weeds on the hill immediately North of the project. On the treated area the noxious weeds treated included; yellow toadflax, houndstongue, Canada thistle, bull thistle and musk thistle. We expect all of these species to be in the project area. All of these noxious weeds are adapted to growing in disturbed soil conditions. There is also the opportunity for noxious weeds to be introduced on site by construction vehicles, support vehicles and individuals using the road.

The soils of this site are deep and productive and associated with a mountain browse vegetation association. The annual precipitation exceeds 17 inches per year making the opportunity for successful reclamation high.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Under the proposed action the disturbed areas would be seeded with adapted native species. The project area is expected to reclaim within three years. With seeding and control of noxious weeds the site should be resistant to future invasion of noxious weed species.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Under this alternative there would not be any reclamation. The disturbed area would vegetate from adjacent seed and propagules stocks. There is likelihood that there is currently noxious weed seeds on site and that these weeds will germinate and dominate the site. Without treatment these weeds will spread into the adjacent plant communities decreasing the usefulness and productivity. Follow-up treatments would be more expensive than controlling weeds during a reclamation process.

*Mitigation:* Native seed mix # 6 from Table B-2 from the White River ROD/RMP should be used. If the site is broadcast the pounds of seed would be doubled and harrowed in.

Mix #	Species (Variety)	# PLS per Acre	Range Sites
6	Bluebunch wheatgrass (Secar)	2	Alpine Meadow, Alpine Slopes,
	Slender wheatgrass (Primar)	2	Aspen Woodlands, Brushy Loam,
	Big bluegrass (Sherman)	1	Deep Clay Loam, Douglas-fir
	Canby bluegrass (Canbar)	1	Woodland, Loamy Park, Mountain
	Mountain brome (Bromar)	2	Loam, Mountain Meadows,
	Alternates: Blue flax <sup>1/</sup> , Rocky		Mountain Swale, Shallow Subalpine,
	Mountain penstemon <sup>2/</sup> , balsamroot		Spruce-fir Woodland, Subalpine
			Loam

<sup>1/</sup>Appar

<sup>2/</sup>Bandera

Noxious weeds would be treated as described in the White River ROD/RMP COA #179. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

## **MIGRATORY BIRDS**

*Affected Environment:* Vegetation along the existing two-track is comprised mainly of sagebrush and mountain shrub species (e.g., Gambel oak and serviceberry). Non-game populations associated with these habitat types are widespread and common throughout the Resource Area.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Removal of rocks and brush from the existing two-track would have no measurable influence on the abundance or distribution of breeding migratory birds.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* None

*Mitigation:* None

## **THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)**

*Affected Environment:* The mountain shrub habitat which surrounds the proposed area may provide potential habitat for sharp-tailed grouse, a BLM State sensitive species.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Removal of rocks and overgrown brush from the existing two-track would have no measurable influence on sharp-tailed grouse populations or habitat.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* None

*Mitigation:* None

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species:* The proposed action will have little if any influence on the populations or habitats of Threatened and Endangered species in the area, thereby having no bearing on the public land health standard.

## **WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID**

*Affected Environment:* There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* No hazardous wastes would be generated. Small quantities of solid could be potentially be generated by day to day operations.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* No hazardous wastes would be generated. Small quantities of solid could be potentially be generated by day to day operations.

*Mitigation:* The applicant shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed action.

## **WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)**

*Affected Environment:* The proposed action is in Clear Creek tributary to Milk Creek and the Yampa River. A review of the Colorado's 1989 Nonpoint Source Assessment Report (plus updates), the 305(b) report, the 303(d) list and the Unified Watershed Assessment was one to see if any water quality concerns have been identified. All actions are within the White River watershed. This segment of stream has been identified in segment 3C of the State Stream Classifications and Water Quality Standards. The State has classified this stream segment as Warm Aquatic Life 1, Recreation 1b, Water Supply and Agriculture. The state has further defined water quality parameters with table values. These standards reflect the ambient water quality and define maximum allowable concentrations for the various water quality parameters. The anti-degradation rule applies to this segment meaning no further water quality degradation is allowable that would interfere with or become harmful to the designated uses.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Impacts to water quality from upgrading the road and permitting its use as an access route would be similar to any surface disturbing activity. Roads are a large contributor of suspended sediment discharge from water running off of them. If BMPs were implemented and maintained such as but not limited to, water spreaders, water bars, crowning and ditching these impacts would be manageable.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The same impacts are not expected from the no-action alternative.

*Mitigation:* None

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality:* Water Quality in the project area currently meets the Standard and would be expected to continue to meet the Standard in the future with implementation of the proposed action.

## **CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:**

Impacts to air quality are not anticipated, no ACEC's, flood plains, riparian or wetland systems, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. Furthermore, there is no

reasonable likelihood that the proposed action or no action alternative would have an influence on whether riparian or wetland habitats would meet the Public Land Health Standard. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

## **NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS**

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

### **SOILS** (includes a finding on Standard 1)

*Affected Environment:* The soils have been mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in an order III soil survey. This survey is available for review at the White River Field Office. Below is a table of the soils encounter by the road and soil properties of each type.

Location	Soil Number	Soil Name	Slope	Range site	Salinity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Bedrock
24	24	Cochetopa-Jerry loams	12-25%	Brushy Loam	<2	Medium	High to very high	>60
103	102	Work Loam	3-15%	Deep Loam	<2	Medium	Moderate to high	>60

Soil mapping unit 24 is found on mountainsides. The Cochetopa soil is deep and well drained. It formed in alluvium and colluvium derived dominantly from sandstone and basalt. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is dark grayish brown loam about 8 inches thick. The lower part is dark grayish brown loam about 11 inches thick. The upper 10 inches of the subsoil is dark grayish brown clay loam, and the lower 15 inches is yellowish brown clay. The substratum to a depth of 60 inches or more is grayish brown clay loam. In some areas the surface layer is cobbly loam. It is in Brushy Loam range site. 102-Work loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes.

Soil mapping unit 103 is deep, well drained soil found on uplands, fans, and terraces. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is brown loam about 4 inches thick. The lower part is brown loam about 6 inches thick. The upper 5 inches of the subsoil is brown clay loam, and the lower 10 inches is light brown clay loam. The next layer is light brown clay loam 15 inches thick. The upper 20 inches of the substratum is pink clay loam, and the lower part to a depth of 60 inches or more is pink loam. In some areas below a depth of 30 inches, this soil is as much as 25 percent rock fragments. In some areas the surface layer is fine sandy loam or clay loam. It is in Deep Loam range site.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Roads are a major contributor to suspended sediment during storm events. This impact would potentially increase without application of BMPs to ensure proper road construction.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Anytime a road is reclaimed to eliminate use, would be beneficial to soils resources.

*Mitigation:* From the White River ROD/RMP use COA #19: Sloping the road base to the outside edge for surface drainage is normally recommended for local spurs or minor collector roads where low volume traffic and lower traffic speeds are anticipated. This is also recommended in situations where long intervals between maintenance will occur and where minimum excavation is wanted. Outsloping is not recommended on gradients greater than eight to 10 percent.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils:*  
The soils in the area are meeting the Land Health Standards and would continue to do so as a result of the proposed action.

## **VEGETATION** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

*Affected Environment:* The vegetation on site is a mountain browse association composed of Gambel Oak, serviceberry, snowberry, mountain sagebrush, elk sedge and a variety of grass and forb species. The mountain browse community produces and estimated range of standing crop green weight biomass of 2200-6400 pounds per acre.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Reclamation using the seed mix recommended, in the reclamation section, would establish quickly and retain soil on site.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The adjacent community would invade the project site and would over time, estimated at 5-10 years stabilize soils.

*Mitigation:* Same as the reclamation section.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities* (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): This site would meet the standards for plant community health following reclamation.

## **WILDLIFE, AQUATIC** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

*Affected Environment:* There is no aquatic wildlife occurring within the project area.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* None

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* None

*Mitigation:* None

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities* (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): There is no aquatic wildlife occurring within the project area. Thus there would be no effect on achievement of the land health standard.

**WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

*Affected Environment:* The area surrounding the proposed action consists of mountain shrub (e.g., Gambel oak and serviceberry) and sagebrush habitats. No raptor nesting habitat exists within the project area. The area provides year-round habitat for big game species (e.g., elk and mule deer) with higher concentrations during the fall months and lower concentrations during late-winter.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Removal of rock and brush from the existing two-track would have no measurable influence on terrestrial wildlife or habitat condition.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* None

*Mitigation:* None

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities* (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This project would not jeopardize the viability of any animal population. It would have no significant consequence on terrestrial habitat condition, utility, or function, nor have any discernible affect on animal abundance or distribution at any landscape scale. Thus, potential for meeting the land health standard would not be affected.

**OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS:** For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation			X
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights	X		
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise	X		
Paleontology		X	



Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Rangeland Management		X	
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

## ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

*Affected Environment:* The area is identified as an area open to motorized travel.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* This action provides no additional access to public land users with the exception of the adjacent private land owners but otherwise has no impact.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* None.

*Mitigation:* None.

## RECREATION

*Affected Environment:* The proposed action occurs within the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). BLM custodially manages the ERMA to provide for unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and off-highway vehicle use.

The road area most resembles a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPNM). SPNM recreation setting is typically characterized by a natural appearing environment with few administrative controls, low interaction between users but evidence of other users may be present. SPM recreation experience is characterized by a high probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

At present no special recreation permits occur within the vicinity of this action.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*  
As no motorized use will occur, no impacts are to be expected.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* No loss of dispersed recreation potential and no impact to hunting recreationists.

*Mitigation:* No commercial activities (such as guiding and outfitting) shall occur on BLM public lands in T3NR91W without authorized officer's approval.

## VISUAL RESOURCES

*Affected Environment:* The proposed action is located within an area with a VRM II classification. The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action would not attract the attention of the casual observer any more than the existing road. By seeding the existing road and using non-motorized travel primarily, the level of change to the existing landscape should be less obvious than prior to the proposed action. The objective of the VRM II classification would be retained.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no additional environmental consequences.

*Mitigation:* No

**CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:** This action is consistent with the scope of impacts addressed in the White River RMP. The cumulative impacts of road construction use and improvement activities are addressed in the White River RMP for each resource value that would be affected by the proposed action.

**PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:** None

## INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Carol Hollowed	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Robert Fowler	Forester	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>
Bo Brown	Hazmat collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Carol Hollowed	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Carol Hollowed	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Soils
Robert Fowler	Forester	Vegetation
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Robert Fowler	Forester	Rangeland Management
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Keith Whitaker	Natural Resource Specialist	Visual Resources
Valerie Dobrich	NRS	Wild Horses

## Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2005-013-EA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE:** The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

**DECISION/RATIONALE:** It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below.

### **MITIGATION MEASURES:**

1. All maintenance work on the road shall be done in a manner that does not alter the historic character of the road. For example: the road was quite likely constructed with horse drawn equipment such as a Fresno or a horse drawn blade. All maintenance shall be done with hand tools, where appropriate, or with equipment that retains the appearance of having been done with horse drawn equipment.
2. The road shall not be rerouted or upgraded without additional inventory by an approved Archeologist and consultation, as appropriate, with the Colorado SHPO.
3. Native seed mix # 6 from Table B-2 from the White River ROD/RMP should be used. If the site is broadcast, the pounds of seed would be doubled and harrowed in.

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	Canby bluegrass (Canbar)	1	Woodland, Loamy Park, Mountain
	Mountain brome (Bromar)	2	Loam, Mountain Meadows,
			Mountain Swale, Shallow Subalpine,
	Alternates: Blue flax <sup>1/</sup> , Rocky		Spruce-fir Woodland, Subalpine
	Mountain penstemon <sup>2/</sup> , balsamroot		Loam

<sup>1/</sup>Appar  
<sup>2/</sup>Bandera

Noxious weeds would be treated as described in the White River ROD/RMP COA #179. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide

applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

4. The applicant shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed action.

5. No commercial activities (such as guiding and outfitting) shall occur on BLM public lands in T. 3 N., R. 91 W., without the authorized officer's approval.

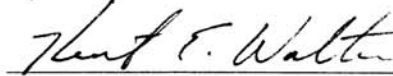
**COMPLIANCE/MONITORING:** Compliance will be conducted by the realty staff every five years.

**NAME OF PREPARER:** Penny Brown

**NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR:**

(AETM) 

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:**



Field Manager

**DATE SIGNED:**

01/18/05

**ATTACHMENTS:**